



MINORITY AND/OR WOMEN
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

COORDINATOR'S CONNECTION

WINTER 2010

5th Annual Mix-n-Meet -n-Learn Business Opportunity Fair and Educational Symposium

Diversity Works!

Most business owners say that the top priority of a successful business is achieving a competitive advantage. Simply put, competitive advantage is the ability to secure business that might otherwise have gone to your competition. There is something about your firm that makes it a cut above the rest. Your customers keep talking about it, and your competition wishes they had it. The secret is out. As we jumpstart 2010, your secret weapon is the "Diversity Advantage".

Diversity in business is more than employee recruitment and retention. It's about who you obtain your supplies and materials from (i.e.: supply chain), the firms you hire to perform outside services (i.e.: contracted services), and the strategic alliances you create to enhance your capacity and/or capabilities. Diversity works when companies move beyond the first step of "representation" and employ strategies which align with business objectives to leverage the new capital that diversity brings.

For some, this means bringing in new business from emerging, untapped markets or improving the quality of goods and services provided by enlarging the pool of resources. For government procurement, it means ensuring an opportunity to all qualified firms thereby increasing competition and driving competitive pricing.

Whatever your bottom-line agenda, diversity works! For this reason, The City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program and East Carolina University have made this our theme for the 5th Annual Mix'n'Meet'n'Learn. As one of the largest business opportunity fairs and educational symposiums east of I-95, the Mix'n'Meet is your opportunity to network

with diverse firms and learn about upcoming business opportunities in the Greenville area. This year's event will be held on Saturday, February 13, 2010 at the East Carolina University Health Sciences Building located at 2100 West 5th Street behind the hospital. Breakfast and registration begin at 8:30am.

Each year, we get better and better, and this year is no exception. Our keynote speaker, Senator Don Davis of the NC General Assembly, will join us for a one-hour session on issues concerning small business. Our vendor fair will include representatives from the major contracting firms that do business in the East, regional business resource centers such as Self-Help and Pitt Community College, and our newest addition, University Health System's Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

To enhance your knowledge of some of the free services offered our diverse business community, we will be hosting the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development, the state leader in minority economic development, and the NC Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses to answer your questions concerning Statewide Uniform Certification (SWUC). To round out the affair, we are bringing back our champion business coach, Coach Michael Washington from Action Coach Business Coaching to give us another one-two-punch of business know-how.

This is one event you don't want to miss! To RSVP, contact Denisha Harris at 252.329.4862 or dharris@greenvillenc.gov.

CITY OF GREENVILLE, NC



A Message from the Coordinator...

Happy New Year!

I like the sound of that. Each new year is a welcomed opportunity to reflect on the past and rejuvenate for the future. For business owners and the resources that support them, rejuvenation signifies the end of one cycle and the beginning of a new cycle of life and vitality for our businesses and programs.

I believe that 2010 will bring business owners a renewed focus on working together and leveraging resources both internally and externally. Aligning goals will not only minimize some of the obstacles that M/WBE's face but will also add value to their positions in a global market. Our Minority Business Roundtable featured in this issue strives to do just this. If you are not a part of this dynamic group, you should consider it. Whether you are a local attorney, landscaper, or restaurant owner, we need your ideas and expertise. We are all in this together.

For business resource centers that support small business, I believe that collaboration should be our philosophy. We must persist to coordinate meaningful efforts that combine talent and resources for the greatest good of those we serve. Thanks so much to all those who work diligently everyday to strengthen and grow our small business core.

The challenges and obstacles of last year are not forgotten. They taught us well, and we are stronger because of them. We take these experiences and use them as fuel, rich in wisdom and full of understanding. Nevertheless, by beginning again, we leave behind that which does not profit and reach forward with anticipation of the great things to come.

contact Denisha at

252.329.4862 or dharris@greenvillenc.gov

Denisha Harris is the City of Greenville and the Greenville Utilities Commission's M/WBE Coordinator



Untangle the Web: Purpose-Driven Business 2010

by Mary Patterson

Open any business publication and you will find numerous articles about social media and its impact on business. Businesses must move beyond having a website and social media marketing to search engine management and online reputation management. Here are the top ten questions to ask yourself:

1. What purpose does my website serve? Do you want people to buy something, call you, or request information?

2. How is my website connecting with the goals of my business? If your site visitors aren't taking action on your site, you need to evaluate the design AND more importantly the content. A good copywriter can drive action and a good search engine management program can drive visitors to your site. Additionally, make sure that all of your websites are consistent with your brand.

3. Who do I want to visit my site? If you don't know who your customer is, chances are that your target customer does not know that they need you. Know the psychographics and demographics of your customers.

4. How will I measure success? Everything on the web from your website to your social networking is quantifiable; use that information to your marketing advantage.

5. Do you have a robots.txt file in your root directory? If not, how are the search engines going to find you?

6. Have your graphics been converted from GIF's to HTML text?

7. Have you removed or reduced the use of Flash?

8. Do the social networking sites that I am a member of reach my target audience? If not, why are you there? It is great to socialize but if you are trying to accomplish something for your business, make sure you are reaching your target demographic.

9. Am I committed to providing fresh information on all of my websites? People become bored quickly on the internet and will not continue to visit your website, blog, or social sites if you aren't providing fresh, dynamic information.

10. Am I making use of tools such as an aggregator that can me more efficient?

Don't just have a website for the sake of having one. Be purpose-driven in the branding, design, optimization, and maintenance of your site. Taking the time to have a solid marketing plan and embracing a few basic marketing strategies will not just save you money; it will cause your website to earn you money in the long run. Remember, your website and online presence are tantamount to having a 24 hour, 365 day a year marketing staff that you need to make work for you, not against you.

The M/WBE Program is pleased to have Mary, a local social media marketing guru, contribute to this issue of the Coordinators Connection. If you would like to learn more, please visit her website at www.thewebsitepartner.com

MBR: A Year in Review

It was in April of 2008 that 40 minority and women business owners sat around the table to discuss success and failure, challenge and opportunity. In a spectrum of not just black and white, but many shades of gray, the business owners who sat around that table had definitely experienced the realities of entrepreneurship as an economically and socially disadvantaged group. But, what makes a business owner an entrepreneur is not the doors that open, but the doors that are created and the equal amounts of patience and persistence that cause one to never give up.

It is this spirit of tenacity that fueled the creation of the Minority Business Roundtable in February of 2009. Nurtured by the City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program and the Greenville-Pitt Chamber of Commerce, MBR has experienced quite a successful first year. As a professional networking association, designed to leverage resources within the M/WBE community to strengthen the M/WBE community, the group is now a united force that acts, creates, and influences. To chronicle its first year in existence, included in this issue of the "Coordinator's Connection" is the "2009 Year in Review." As with the businesses each member operates, the MBR has experienced its peaks and valleys but has emerged ready to soar. Look out 2010!

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advice in all aspects of the City and
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Trouble locating us on the web?

Try our new address: www.greenvillencmwbe.org.
Get the information you need,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Minority Business Roundtable: 2009 Year in Review

"Fostering supportive networks for the education, opportunity, and empowerment of minority business owners"

- **80 registered members.** Members include all business types (e.g. construction, general service, human service, light manufacturing/retail, restaurant, and business support service providers).
- **Held 10 general body meetings.**
- **Elected 4 officers and 3 committee chair persons.**

President: Torey Mattison, Core Fitness & Wellness Center

Education Chair: Carlton Gay, EXCEED

Vice-President: Owen Burney, Burney & Burney Construction

Opportunity Chair: Bob Griffin, ECU

Secretary: Lola Thompson, True Connections Hair Salon

Empowerment Chair: Dede Carney, Carney & Co

Treasurer: Bessie Barnes, Chamber of Commerce

Realtors

- **Implemented "Take 10" business information spots.**

At the beginning of each meeting, selected business owners and guests have the opportunity to market their firm to the general body or inform the group on relevant resources and services available in the community. In 2009, MBR invited special guests Dr. Mike Harris of the Small Business Institute, Coach Michael Washington of Action Coaching, and Tomeka Simmons, a private insurance broker.

- **Contributed to "Coordinator's Connection."** A quarterly newsletter published by the City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program, the MBR membership contributed to the relevant news and information provided in this media outlet.

- **Participated in 4 Educational/Outreach Opportunities.**

Accessing NC Stimulus Funds (May)

Sponsored by the NC Rural Center, NCIMED, NC Community Development Initiative, Delta Sigma Theta, and the NAACP, this forum was designed to discuss how to access over 6 billion in NC ARRA funds. Representatives from State agencies responsible for administering funds provided mini-tutorials.

"Open House" (August)

Hosted by the City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program, the "Open House" was an opportunity to meet face-to-face with the major buyers and purchasers of the City of Greenville and GUC.

SBA Community Express Loan Seminar (September)

Sponsored by SBA, NCIMED, Pitt Community College SBC, and Delta Sigma Theta, this seminar explained the process of application for the SBA Community Express Loan available in amounts from \$5,000-\$25,000.

NC Rural Center & You (November)

Hosted by the City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program, this event showcased the lending opportunities available through the NC Rural Center.

- **Sponsored 1 educational opportunity.**

"Don't be Tardy for the Party: Social Media Networking 101"

Mary Patterson, social networking guru, provided need-to-know information about how to leverage the free resource of social media.

- **Hosted or Co-Hosted 3 networking events.**

Mix'n'Meet'n'Learn (February)

Business owners and entrepreneurs mixed and mingled at the City of Greenville/GUC M/WBE Program's largest networking event of the year. Co-sponsored by **East Carolina University** and the **Minority Business Roundtable**, the mixer fostered B2B connections and offered trainings, workshops, and an on-site certification lab.

Luncheon with the Bankers (June)

Access to capital is consistently one of the major barriers to success for the M/WBE community. This reality, re-iterated by the Minority Business Roundtable Needs Assessment Survey, prompted MBR to host this event with five community banks. Bank reps and MBR members discussed the current lending crisis and the challenges of gaining access to capital. Bankers in attendance:

Albemarle Bank & Trust East Carolina Bank
BB&T First Citizens Southern Bank

Meet, Eat, and Greet! (October)

Leaders such as the City and County Managers, Management from East Carolina University and Pitt County Memorial Hospital, and local bankers, physicians, and community leaders joined the MBR for food and conversation concerning the business landscape and the needs and desires of the minority business community.

Upcoming Business Development Training & Workshops

February 13 "Diversity Works!"
5th Annual Mix'n'Meet'n'Learn
ECU Health Sciences Building
8:30am-12:30pm

February 18 Minority Business Roundtable
Greenville City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
12:00 pm-2:00 pm

March 18 Minority Business Roundtable
Greenville City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
12:00 pm-2:00 pm

To view the Spring 2010 Class Schedule for Pitt Community College Small Business Center, visit <http://www.pittcc.edu/continuing-education/programs/small-business-center/>

Registration is required for all trainings & workshops.



"Putting Our Words to Work."

- Electronic Notification of Upcoming Bid Opportunities
- Business Locator in M/WBE Directory
- Business Development & Technical Assistance
- Quarterly Newsletter with the Latest Information

For more information, contact: Denisha Harris, M/WBE Coordinator at 252.329.4862 dharris@greenvillenc.gov

Check out our information on the City's website, www.greenvillenc.gov under the Financial Services' Purchasing Division.

East Carolina Connection:

by Nellie Taylor

East Carolina University Materials Management would like to wish all business owners a Happy & Prosperous New Year!!

5th Annual Mix-n-Meet-n-Learn Diversity Works!

Saturday, February 13, 2010
8:30am-12:30pm
ECU Health Sciences Building
2100 West 5th Street
Greenville, NC 27834
Registration & Breakfast: 8:30am

sponsored by:



It is the policy of the City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities Commission to provide minorities and women equal opportunity for participating in all aspects of the City's and Utilities' contracting and procurement programs, including but not limited to, construction projects, supplies and materials purchases, and professional and personal service contracts.

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